Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-25 (cancelled)

26. (new) A convertible vehicle comprising:

a vehicle body having a vehicle windshield frame, and

a foldable convertible top having:

a substantially rigid front portion arranged and constructed to include a downwardly directed component of movement towards a windshield frame of the vehicle during a convertible top closing operation, the front portion being further arranged and constructed to engage the vehicle windshield frame in a convertible top closed position,

a tensioning bow pivotably coupled to the vehicle body,

a dead center point linkage pivotably coupled to the vehicle body such that a distance between the tensioning bow and a rear portion of the dead center point linkage increases when the front portion is downwardly moving towards the windshield frame, and

at least one dampening device fixedly coupled to the pivotable tensioning bow and being operably coupled to the front portion so as to impart mechanical resistance against the downwardly directed component of the movement of the front portion towards the vehicle windshield frame during the convertible top closing operation.

27. (new) A convertible vehicle as in claim 26, wherein the dampening device is arranged and constructed to impart the mechanical resistance only when subjected to traction loading.

28. (new) A convertible vehicle as in claim 27, wherein the dampening device is an oil-filled shock absorber comprising an extendable and retractable piston.

29. (new) A convertible vehicle as in claim 28, further comprising a resiliently elastic traction cable having a first end coupled to the piston and a second end coupled to the rear portion of the dead center point linkage, the traction cable extending via a direction-changing element in a manner that changes the direction of at least a portion of the traction cable and wherein the oil-filled shock absorber is disposed in parallel with a longitudinally-extending, side portion of the tensioning bow.

30. (new) A convertible vehicle as in claim 29, wherein the direction-changing element is arranged and constructed to change the direction of the traction member by about 90°.

31. (new) A convertible vehicle as in claim 30, wherein the direction-changing element is disposed on the tensioning bow.

32. (new) A convertible vehicle as in claim 26, further comprising a resiliently elastic traction cable having a first end coupled to the at least one dampening device and a second end coupled to the rear portion of the dead center point linkage, the traction cable extending via a direction-changing element in a manner that changes the direction of at least a portion of the traction cable.

33. (new) A convertible vehicle as in claim 32, wherein the direction-changing element is arranged and constructed to change the direction of the traction member by about 90°.

34. (new) A convertible vehicle as in claim 33, wherein the direction-changing element is disposed on the tensioning bow.

35. (new) A convertible vehicle as in claim 34, wherein the convertible top further comprises a plurality of lateral frame portions, and wherein the dead center point linkage is disposed along a longitudinal direction of the lateral frame portions and a front portion of the dead center point linkage is operably coupled to the front portion.

36. (new) A convertible vehicle as in claim 35, wherein the front portion comprises a substantially rigid structural member arranged and constructed to transversely extend between the windshield frame and the dead center point linkage.

37. (new) A convertible vehicle as in claim 36, wherein the at least one dampening device comprises an oil-filled shock absorber having a retractable piston coupled to the traction cable.

38. (new) A convertible vehicle as in claim 37, wherein the piston is arranged and constructed to extend by a piston stroke length of at least 35 mm when the front portion is moving downwardly towards the vehicle windshield frame.

39. (new) A convertible vehicle comprising:

a vehicle body having a vehicle windshield frame, and

a foldable convertible top having:

a substantially rigid front portion arranged and constructed to include a downwardly directed component of movement towards a windshield frame of the vehicle during a convertible top closing operation, the front portion being further arranged and constructed to engage the vehicle windshield frame in a convertible top closed position,

a tensioning bow pivotably coupled to the vehicle body,

a dead center point linkage pivotably coupled to the vehicle body such that a distance between the tensioning bow and a rear portion of the dead center point linkage increases when the front portion is downwardly moving towards the windshield frame,

at least one oil-filled shock absorber fixedly coupled to the pivotable tensioning bow, the shock absorber comprising an extendable and retractable piston and

a resiliently elastic traction cable having a first end coupled to the piston and a second end coupled to the rear portion of the dead center point linkage, the traction cable extending via a direction-changing element in a manner that changes the direction of at least a portion of the traction cable, the shock absorber and traction cable being arranged and constructed to (i) impart mechanical resistance against the downwardly directed component of the movement of the front portion towards the vehicle windshield frame during the convertible top closing operation only when subjected to traction loading.

40. (new) A convertible vehicle as in claim 39, wherein the oil-filled shock absorber is disposed in parallel with a longitudinally-extending, side portion of the tensioning bow.

41. (new) A convertible vehicle as in claim 39, wherein the direction-changing element is arranged and constructed to change the direction of the traction member by about 90°.

42. (new) A convertible vehicle as in claim 39, wherein the direction-changing element is disposed on the tensioning bow.

43. (new) A convertible vehicle as in claim 39, wherein the convertible top further comprises a plurality of lateral frame portions, and wherein the dead center point linkage is disposed along a longitudinal direction of the lateral frame portions and a front portion of the dead center point linkage is operably coupled to the front portion.

44. (new) A convertible vehicle as in claim 43, wherein the front portion comprises a substantially rigid structural member arranged and constructed to transversely extend between the windshield frame and the dead center point linkage.

45. (new) A convertible vehicle as in claim 39, wherein the piston of the shock absorber is arranged and constructed to extend by a piston stroke length of at least 35 mm when the front portion is moving downwardly towards the vehicle windshield frame.